

Message Text

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46

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 IO-13 OMB-01 EB-11 COME-00 AID-20

IGA-02 ACDA-19 MC-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 PC-04 NIC-01 RSR-01 /183 W

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R 121252Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8280

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

USUN NEW YORK 816

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PRETORIA 2390

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, MARR, SF, RH

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE MAKE SHOW OF HELICOPTERS

IN SALISBURY

1. ACCORDING TO AFRIKAANS PRESS, SIX SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE (SAP) HELICOPTERS, PROBABLY SUPER FRELONS, MADE PUBLIC APPEARANCE IN SALISBURY EARLIER THIS WEEK IN CONNECTION WITH CELEBRATION OF FOUNDERS DAY. THEY WERE PUT THROUGH PACES WITH LOW PASSES OVER CITY TO ENSURE MAXIMUM VISIBILITY. THIS WAS FIRST TIME SAP HELICOPTERS HAVE BEEN SEEN IN PUBLIC OVER RHODESIA.

2. IN CIRCUMSTANCES, IT NOT SURPRISING THAT HELICOPTERS

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CAUSED SENSATION IN SALISBURY AND ELICITED FLOOD OF RUMORS

THAT SOUTH AFRICA HAD DECIDED INCREASE ITS SECURITY
FORCES IN RHODESIA IN LIGHT RECENT SPECTACULAR GUERRILLA
OPERATIONS THERE. AMONG RUMORS REPORTEDLY MAKING ROUNDS OF
SALISBURY WERE REPORTS THAT SOUTH AFRICAN PRIME MINISTER
VORSTER MADE SECRET VISIT TO RHODESIA LAST WEEK TO DISCUSS
SECURITY SITUATION AND THAT HELICOPTERS BELONGS TO SOUTH
AFRICAN ARMY AND REPRESENTED FIRST ELEMENT OF SOUTH AFRICAN
DEFENSE FORCE (SADF) PRESENCE IN RHODESIA.

3. EVIDENTLY CONCERNED BY RUMORS OF SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY
INVOLVEMENT, CHIEF DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF SAP, P.J. VENTER,
HAS REACTED WITH STATEMENT THAT HELICOPTERS BELONGED TO
SAP AND NOT RPT NOT TO SADF. HE ADDED, "THERE ARE ALSO ONLY
POLICEMEN IN RHODESIA. THE ARMY IS CERTAINLY NOT INVOLVED IN
THIS AFFAIR." RHODESIAN DEFENSE MINISTRY OFFICIALS HAVE
ANNOUNCED THAT HELICOPTERS WERE "PART OF THE NORMAL BACKING-
UP AIRCRAFT FOR SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE IN THIS COUNTRY."

4. COMMENT: SAP HELICOPTERS APPARENTLY HAVE BEEN OPERATING
IN SUPPORT OF SAP OPERATIONS IN RHODESIA FOR SOME TIME. THEIR
PUBLIC APPEARANCE AT THIS JUNCTURE WAS PROBABLY INTENDED AS
DEMONSTRATION OF STRENGTH TO REASSURE WHITES IN BOTH RHODESIA
AND SOUTH AFRICA THAT SECURITY SITUATION STILL UNDER CONTROL.
THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF ANY SAG DECISION TO INCREASE ITS
SECURITY FORCES IN RHODESIA OR TO INTRODUCE SADF THERE. IN
PAST, SAG HAS REPEATEDLY DISCLAIMED ANY SUCH INTENTIONS.
RUNAWAY RUMORS CIRCULATING AFTER APPEARANCE OF HELICOPTERS
WOULD APPEAR TO ATTEST TO UNSETTLING IMPACT OF RECENT GUERRILLA
OPERATIONS AND NOTHING MORE.

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